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10, 2006

by Kenaz Filan (Author)

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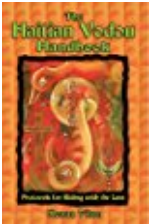
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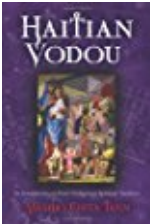
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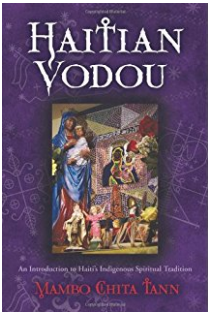
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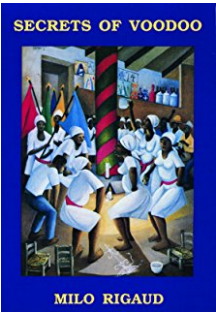
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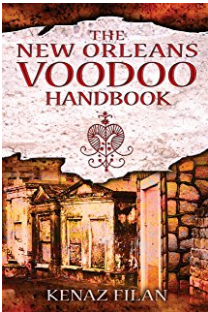
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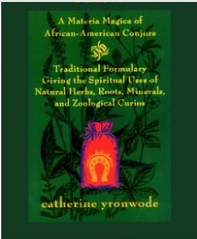
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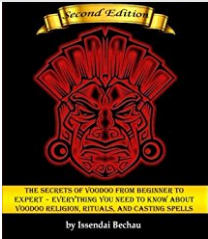
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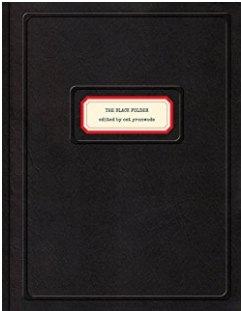
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## Editorial Reviews

### From Publishers Weekly

Vodou is not what most people think. It's not "devil worship, dark curses, and drumbeat-driven orgies performed at midnight," poking needles at dolls or simple superstition. With over a decade of service to the lwa (the deities of Vodou) and membership in Soci  t   la Belle Venus #2, a Vodou temple in Brooklyn, Filan sets out to right these pulpy perspectives of what in reality is a complex African diaspora spirituality and a form of worship that marries the secular and the spiritual. Of course, Vodou is not without its dangers, since "the lwa can wreak a frightening vengeance." It's not foolproof, either; without proper initiation into addressing the lwa, they will simply ignore you. But Filan aspires to give potential initiates the proper tools for communicating with the deities of Vodou (like Mama Danto, who protects, and Papa Damballah, who brings peace). In the process, he shares the rich and at times disturbing history of its practitioners (especially the oppression and racism faced during slavery) and offers a litany of everything necessary to practice Vodou on an individual level, from knowledge of the tradition's most important symbols, rites, myths and spells to an extensive list of further resources and Vodou-related Web sites, music and even charities.



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Vodou (as Filan prefers spelling *voodoo*) is more misunderstood than appreciated in contemporary America, but Filan does an excellent job of presenting his religion to the lay reader. Although written especially for those who hope to practice vodou, the book is also a good introduction for armchair *hougans* and *mambos* (male and female celebrants). Start, Filan advises, by understanding the social reality in which vodou arose. In chapters of excellent, readable history, he describes the slave trade and the bloody slave revolts that led to the eventual establishment of today's Haiti. He doesn't flinch from describing the vodou connections of the frightful Tonton Makout, "Papa Doc" Duvalier's personal militia, nor does he pretend that vodou is invariably a route to peace and harmony. Like any religion, it can be employed negatively, too. After his comprehensive introduction, Filan goes into some of the major *lwes* (roughly translated, "gods and goddesses," but *lwes* could also be considered to indicate saints, though never human saints) that a practitioner might encounter. A good, respectful resource. *Patricia Monaghan*

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### Biography





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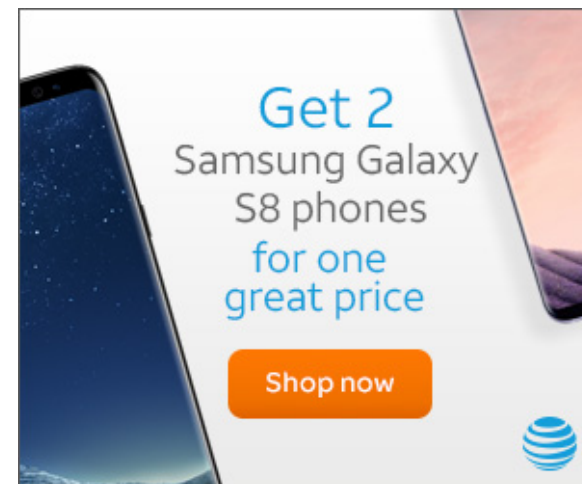
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Very good book. As a Haitian person that practices, I can say it's very good, but there are a few minor points.

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### A Vodou Handbook with Heart and Substance

By [Natalie Zaman](#) on August 17, 2008

Format: Paperback [Verified Purchase](#)

I echo many of the sentiments expressed in previous reviews of this work. To add to those, my first reading left me with the impression that Filan not only has deep love and appreciation for her spirituality, but of the culture of Haiti as well. Practices and the lwa themselves are related back to Haitian culture, giving the reader a wider context of appreciation for this spiritual path, and yet, not alienating them from it.

I also found it refreshing that Filan went beyond the "how-to" format that so many texts seem to fall into these days; "I"-centric compilations that center around ways the reader can craft their way to more money, fame, relationships etc. Filan does offer suggestions for working with the lwa for help with such matters, but emphasizes throughout the importance of establishing a friendly relationship with the lwa, and thus with the community, within and beyond the spirituality, globally and locally. This is done in such a way that you don't feel as if you're being preached to.

The book is very user-friendly. Filan's conversational writing style will take you through the vast amount of information presented with ease--and I think the organization of the book helps as well. I found that I was able to open to any particular section for quick reference. For example, one section that I reread, was on "Sacrifice" in the "Practices" section. I raise my own chickens, and am familiar with the slaughter and prep that goes into bringing an animal for the dinner table, and subsequently, ethical use and treatment of animals for food has been a subject that I've been exploring (further recommended reading: River Cottage Meat Book). I thought that Filan's treatment of this aspect of Vodou was both respectful and informative; I don't think that most folks are aware that animals sacrificed to the lwa are also consumed as food. Put into the context of culture, and thoroughly explored, the basic practices of Vodou are revealed as the building of familial and communal spiritual bonds. Filan dispels many myths.

A great read for beginners from a long-time practitioner, this book has heart and substance. I highly recommend this!

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### Good with a caution.

This book was very good and easy to follow. The only thing it didn't warn about is how careful you must be with these spirits. They are more volatile than Arch Demons. [Read more](#)

Published 7 months ago by steven moore

### What I like about this book is that it debunk the myth ...

What I like about this book is that it debunk the myth that vodou is evil and shared light it some people's way of life and has nothing to do with evil

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Published 8 months ago by Amazon Customer

### Four Stars

very good [Read more](#)

Published 11 months ago by darrell king

### Very educational

Well written book [Read more](#)

Published 1 year ago by Rose

### Four Stars

Wanted to learn about it [Read more](#)

Published 1 year ago by Ryan Miller

### Five Stars

Very informal [Read more](#)

Published on January 9, 2015 by Marty cole turner

### It's ok but i wasn't impressed

Not as informative as i thought it would be

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Published on December 20, 2014 by SASHA STEELE



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Being a native of the same place, this book rings very true on many different levels. It is a treasure to own!

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### Five Stars

By [Carlo B.](#) on October 7, 2014

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Interesting to read about the religion/ culture,...now understand more about Haitian culture and why the distrust of others.

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### A must read for anyone who needs anything.

By [lovesfoo](#) on September 1, 2014

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This book is my GO TO. Packed full with helpful and insightful info. I'm immediately reading it for a second time!

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By [Herman](#) on September 21, 2014

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By [S. Cranow](#) on June 23, 2011

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I liked the new orleans book better, its marginally better because I am not familiar with that subject matter as much as this tradition, therefore I could not find as much wrong... [Read more](#)

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request but they will ask for some favor in return. Keep your word with the lowa or they will get back at you. Cool thing about the Loa is that y9u can serve them anyway you see fit or know how. The Loa do not care so much how correct your devotion is but they do care about the sincerety of your servic. Heck even Wiccans serve them in their circles. Oh by the way you do not have to be initiated into a peristyle or vodou temple in order to serve the Loa or work with them.

Kenaz Filan has written a master piece on Haitian vodou. His book meticulously lists and describes the various Lowa and he shows how to serve them. He covers both Ptetwo Loa and the Rada Loa. One house is quicker and hotter and they may answer you request a lot qicker but do not get them ticked off and definitely keep you vows to them. THE other house it cooler Loa they may be slow to take but they also have a cooler temper. Legba the old man with a limp and cane is always the one who opens the dorr for other Loa to come threw. Damballah the big snake who coild=s hims self around the world is real cool and likes everything to be clean. He also dislikes alcohol. Cousin Zaka is the farmer in jeans, Agwe is the sea king married to La Sirene or Frieda. THE Ghedes are the spiirits of the dead visiting with one eyes sunglasses and loving a good drink and dirty joke.

THE Haitians have a had a rough life. Starting out as a slave colony for the French and then after a bloody overhtrow things were left i to the hand of mulaatos. Power and privelige are the key in Haiti. THEIR attitude towards money and love is very realistic. Much diferent then Wiccan attitudes. Life is stil harsh over there and poverty is no virtue.

It is a great book that gives one a good ground work to start serving the Loa. He gives away no secrets of his peristyle and he takes oaths rather seriously. He believes you need to be intiatiated to learn more although you can get results independently. He also warn against instant initiations, bullying and peristyle leaders who abuse their authority. When choosing a house make sure you are comfortable as they will be a quasi family. This book deserves a five out five rating.

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### Best BOOK on Haitian Vodou yet! YES BUY IT!

By [Salubrious Surrey](#) on April 23, 2012

Format: Paperback [Verified Purchase](#)

This book was worth much more than I paid. I love it so far & hate to put it down. A must have for anyone who is interested in truly learning about the Lwas or those who already do and love to read other



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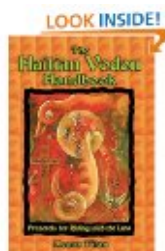
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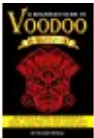
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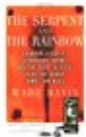


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